

ETTINGTON C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Reviewed September 2023



Learning for Fullness of Life
Trust-Respect - Love

GUIDANCE FOR VISITS & VISITORS TO RE LESSONS 2023-2024

Ettington Church of England Primary School

Guidance for Visits and Visitors to RE lessons.

Introduction

Well conducted school visits to places of worship or visits by members of belief communities to schools should be of tremendous educational benefit to both schools and communities. Such events are also of great value in enhancing schools' SMSC provision and helping to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain, with its increasingly diverse communities. These guidelines aim to consider the thinking behind such visits; what both schools and belief communities can expect from each other, and to give some recommendations to aid the planning process.

It is emphasised throughout that:

- The purpose of all visits is educational, not to evangelise or proselytise
- The teacher must be present throughout all visits and should supervise and be actively involved in them, from the planning stage to the evaluation at the end;
- Members of belief communities should recognise that they are speaking as an individual, and that their views may be part of a spectrum of diversity within that community;
- Parents should be informed about the educational purpose of such visits.

Members of belief communities taking part in the life of the school, including visits to places of worship, should:

- Be willing to share their own experiences, beliefs and insights, but avoid: i. Criticising the experience and insights of others and ii. Imposing their views on pupils in any way
- Be familiar with the school's aims, ethos and policies and plan their involvement in the light of the aims and curriculum of the school;
- Seek to use engaging teaching and learning methods that involve the pupils actively, and to communicate at appropriate levels for the age group concerned;
- Be willing to respect and value the beliefs of any pupils and adults in the school when they are different from their own;
- Develop ways of speaking to pupils that communicate their open approach, avoiding any hidden agenda to 'convert' or proselytise.

Visits

A visit to a place of worship should be a hugely enriching experience as part of RE. Visits allow pupils to see that places of worship are not just a building but also a living community of believers, giving pupils a 'feel' of the faith and a sense of the 'spiritual', and ensuring that pupils take more away from the visit than just facts about beliefs, practices and artefacts. Visiting a place of worship can also be a multi – sensory experience involving sight, smell, touch, hearing and even taste. This helps pupils of all abilities to absorb and retain their learning.

A visit might include:

- Engaging activities that include a combination of listening, doing, talking, questioning and recording in age – appropriate ways
- Activities designed to enhance specific Agreed Syllabus units
- A tour of the place of worship
- Handling of special objects
- Interviews with members of the belief community

It should be made clear that the teacher remains responsible for the pupils throughout the visit and should be seen as an active participant, working in partnership with the host e.g. leading questions, intervening in behaviour management and so on. Teachers should be prepared to step in and refocus the direction of the session if it becomes inappropriate for the visiting pupils. Good communication is essential, and it should be expected that both schools and host communities are involved in agreeing the content of visits.



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Code of Conduct for partnership between members of belief communities and the school.

This agreement provides the basis of the partnership between members of belief communities (in their capacity as either host or visitor) and the school

The school

The member of staff responsible for the visit(s) will:

- Explain the purpose and nature of the proposed visit(s) to or by a member of a belief community
- Explain the context of the school's programme for RE, CW or SMSC
- Outline the needs of the school and negotiate the most appropriate contribution by the member of a belief community
- Set out the relevant school policies concerning health and safety, child protection and behaviour
- Liaise with the visitor prior to the visit to about the aims and content of the visit
- Pay any fees and other costs where formally agreed in advance

Member(s) of belief communities

Members of belief communities engaging with schools as part of a visit to a place of worship, or as visitors to school as part of RE or CW will:

- Be involved in the planning of the session
- Evaluate the session
- Adhere to the NATRE Code of Conduct which states that: Members of belief communities taking part in the life of the school, including visits to places of worship should:
 - Be willing to share their own experiences, beliefs and insights, but avoid: i. Criticising the experience and insight of others and ii. Imposing their views on pupils in any way
 - Be familiar with the school's aims, ethos and policies and plan their involvement in the light of the aims and curriculum at the school
 - Seek to use engaging teaching and learning methods that involve the pupils actively, and to communicate at appropriate levels for the age group(s) concerned
 - Be willing to respect and value the beliefs of any pupils and adults in the school when they are different from their own
 - Develop ways of speaking to pupils that communicate their open approach, avoiding any hidden agenda to 'convert' or proselytise
 - Seek to uphold the principle of the 'Golden Rule' e.g. 'If a member of another religion or belief visited my child's school and contributes in the same way that I have done would I, as a parent, be happy with the education given?'

Signed (teacher) Date.....

Signed (Host/visitor)Date.....